UNITED NATIONS **S**

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1999/600
24 May 1999

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 24 MAY 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF DJIBOUTI TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to share with you my country's real apprehension about a menacing development in the Horn of Africa that may have the potential of igniting widespread regional conflict. I am referring to the widely reported as well as corroborated accounts of Eritrean weapons and personnel involvement in the anarchic and clearly explosive situation in Somalia.

We all know that despite the massive efforts by the international community to forge peace, stability and government in Somalia, that country remains today a powder keg capable of detonating again at any moment. Tensions remain high and, as usual, the implications for the weary, ordinary Somalis are grave.

In what must be seen as a cynical move to exploit these strains for its own and others' strategic advantage, Eritrea embarked on shipment of weapons and troops by sea and air through "proxy" factions into Somalia. What is even more worrying is the fact that these actions are not limited to shipment of arms or activities within Somalia only. There is incontrovertible evidence that the bulk of the troops is of non-Eritrean origin. We also understand they are being deployed in Somalia for the purpose of destabilizing neighbouring countries in general and Ethiopia in particular. Obviously, these acts constitute blatant attempts to open additional fronts in the ongoing conflict.

It is also a clear violation of Security Council resolution 733 (1992) and subsequent resolutions which called upon all Member States to "immediately implement a general and complete embargo on all deliveries of weapons and military equipment ... and to refrain from any actions which might contribute to increasing tension".

By arming selected factions in Somalia, who are further used as "proxies" for the wider political and military designs beyond Somalia, Eritrea's feverish attempts to widen the base of its conflict with Ethiopia are indeed creating unwarranted and ill-advised tensions. Djibouti condemns such unbridled pursuit of gun-diplomacy.

The Government of Djibouti, therefore, calls upon the Council to take urgent necessary measures designed to thwart Eritrea's undisguised provocative and destabilizing activities in the region, whose implications are far beyond measurement of comprehension.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Roble OLHAYE
Ambassador
Permanent Representative